Policy versus Practice. Language variation and change in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch

Krogull, A.

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Author: Krogull, A.
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Orthographic variables (5)
West Germanic *$\bar{\imath}$

1 Discussion in Siegenbeek (1804)

As the very first spelling issue discussed and regulated in the second part (*Tweede afdeeling*) of his 1804 orthography, Siegenbeek addressed the letters *ij* and *y*, which also covers the orthographic representation of the vowel derived from West Germanic *$\bar{\imath}$[61] as <ij> or <y> in words such as *wij*/*wy* 'we' or *mijn*/*myn* 'my'. Historically, Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ was pronounced as a monophtong [iː] probably up until the end of the Middle Dutch period. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (or in initial stages even earlier, cf. Willeyms 2013: 76), the diphthongisation of the long *i* into [ɛi] took place. Traditionally considered to have its roots in the Brabant dialects, diphthongisation ultimately spread from the culturally and politically dominant cities in Holland to the surrounding areas. This sound change is typically associated with Kloeke's (1927) theory of the *Hollandsche expansie* 'Hollandic expansion'. More recently, however, it has been argued that diphthongisation is "a polygenetic phenomenon, having started almost simultaneously in Brabant and Holland" (Willemyns 2013: 76).

Irrespective of the exact regional or social genesis, it is important to highlight that the diphthongisation of the long *i* did not spread to the entire language area. In fact, whereas the central part of the language area (including Holland, Utrecht and Brabant) realise [ɛi] (or the more open [æi]), Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ has remained undiphthongised in several other dialect regions until the present day. In large parts of Zeeland as well as in the eastern parts of the Netherlands, from Groningen to (eastern) Limburg, the historical monophthong has been maintained (cf. Goossens et al. 2000a: 123-145).

Focusing on the orthographic representation of Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$, Siegenbeek (1804) both elaborately and critically outlined the historical developments, from its origins in medieval manuscripts as the doubled <ii> spelling to the two central representations as <ij> and <y>. The rise of the latter was criticised by Siegenbeek (1804: 76) for being unnecessary and against the nature of Dutch language:

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[61] Vosters et al. (2012: 263) refer to this variable as the spelling of the diphthongised [ɛi]. However, since the vowel under investigation was not diphthongised throughout the whole language area (van der Wal & van Bree 2008: 262), I more abstractly refer to the vowel derived from Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$.

Uit het voorgestelde laat zich nu ook gemakkelijk het antwoord opmaken op de vraag, of men de *y* in de spelling van Nederduitsche woorden tegenwoordig al dan niet zal blijven behouden. Immers, daar dit klankteeken, buiten eenige noodzake, en tegen de oorspronkelijke inrigting onzer tale, door eene ongepaste navolging der Franschen, in dezelve is doorgedrongen, daar men de *y* reeds overlang uit Nederduitsche woorden heeft begonnen uit te monsteren, en latere taalkundigen en de netste schrijvers het te dezen aanzien eens zijn, zoo kan er geene reden worden uitgedacht, waarom men deze letter uit het Nederduitsch *alphabet* niet geheel zou uitwisschen, en daarvoor het echte Nederduitsche klankteeken *ij* in de plaats stellen.

'From the presented, one can easily give the answer to the question whether or not one should maintain the *y* in the contemporary spelling of Dutch words. After all, as this letter has penetrated into our language, needlessly and against its original design, by inappropriately following the French, and as one had already started to reject the *y* in Dutch words long time ago, which later linguists and the most respectable writers agreed on, one cannot think of any other reason, why one should not entirely erase this letter from the Dutch *alphabet*, and substitute it by the real Dutch letter *ij* instead.'

In line with 'later linguists and the most respectable writers', Siegenbeek (1804: 79-80) ultimately rejected the foreign letter <y> in favour of the indigenous Dutch <ij>:

Het besluit van al het verhandelde […] is derhalve, dat men het klankteeken *y* alleen gebruiken moet in woorden, welke, door middel der Latijnsche, uit de Grieksche taal genomen zijn, en waarin hetzelve den waren klank van *u* heeft, als *Cyrus*, *Cyprus*, *Assyrie* en meer dergelijke vreemde benamingen; doch in echte Nederduitsche woorden, met geheele verwerping der aan onze taal niet eigene *y*, alleen het Nederduitsche klankteeken *ij* behoort te bezigen.

'The conclusion of the whole discussion […] is therefore that one must only use the letter *y* in words which were borrowed from the Greek language via Latin, and in which it has the true sound of *u*, as *Cyrus*, *Cyprus*, *Assyrie* and more of these foreign names. In proper Dutch words, however, one must only use the Dutch letter *ij*, completely rejecting the *y*, which is alien to our language.'

In other words, Siegenbeek prescribed <ij> as the only orthographic representation for *echte Nederduitsche woorden* 'proper Dutch words' with Wgm. *ī*. Since he regarded *y* as a letter which was not part of the Dutch language but had rather been derived from the Greek language via Latin, Siegenbeek completely rejected the foreign letter in these words[62]. As an exception, foreign proper names (of places, persons, etc.) such as *Cyprus* or *Abyssinie* still had to be spelled with <y> and, importantly, also represents a different pronunciation.

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[62] In a similar way as the Greek *y*, Siegenbeek also rejected three other (foreign) letters, viz. *c*, *q* and *x*. In Dutch words, they should be replaced by the 'indigenous' representations <s> or <k> (for <c>), <kw> (for <q>) and <ks> (for <x>), whereas they were maintained in foreign proper names such as *Cyrus*, *Quintus* or *Xerxes* (cf. Siegenbeek 1804: 80-81).

2   Eighteenth-century normative discussion

The orthographic representation of Wgm. *ī as <ij> or <y> can certainly be regarded as a widely discussed spelling issue in the Northern Netherlands throughout the 1700s. In fact, there is hardly any consensus in metalinguistic discourse, with most eighteenth-century grammarians either preferring undotted <y> or double-dotted <ij>. A few others rather indifferently acknowledged <y> *and* <ij> as coexisting variants, or even introduced a spelling difference in open and closed syllables. This section aims to provide an outline of the normative discussion, focusing on the major tendencies in the eighteenth century.

In the first decade, grammarians such as Moonen (1706) and Sewel (1708) acknowledged the *y* as a legitimate letter of the Dutch alphabet and favoured the <y> spelling for the vowel derived from Wgm. *ī. Moonen (1706: 19), for instance, argued that the lengthening of the *i* by adding *j* is 'not so good or natural', as the *j* in the <ij> spelling is actually a consonant:

> De Y, de leste en zeste Klinkletter, alleen lang, als wy voorhene gezegt hebben, en uit den langen klank der woorden *Vry, myn, pyn, tyt*, waer in zy gevonden wordt, blykt, kan niet verlengt worden.

> 'The Y, the last and sixth vowel, only long, as we have said before, and from the long sound of the words *Vry, myn, pyn, tyt*, in which it can be found, it appears that it cannot be lengthened.'

Similarly, Sewel (1708) also preferred <y> over <ij>, remarking that the latter is frequently used, although it inappropriately consists of a vowel and a consonant:

> IJ wordt zeer veel gebruykt in plaats van de Y, zonder dat men aanmerkt dat zy een klinker en een medeklinker is; maar moogelyk heeft de gelykheyd der Duytsche letteren *ij* en *y* aanleyding tót deeze dwaalinge gegeeven […] (1708: 21)

> Y, by sommigen afgekeurd, omdat die by de aaloude Grieken voor eene U gebruykt wierdt, heeft eechter by ons, gelyk ook by de Engelschen, een' klank dien wy niet derven konnen; en dient in de woorden *Ys, ydel, yver, yzer, vyl, myden, ryden, pryzen, vry, slaaverny, spotterny, schildery* […] (1708: 31)

> 'IJ is very often used in place of the Y, without considering that it is a vowel and a consonant. But possibly the resemblance of the German letters *ij* and *y* has caused this mistake. […]

> Y, rejected by some because it was used for a U by the ancient Greek, however, has a sound in our language, like in English, which we cannot lack, and which is used in the words *Ys, ydel, yver, yzer, vyl, myden, ryden, pryzen, vry, slaaverny, spotterny, schildery* […]'

Less explicitly than Moonen and Sewel, other early eighteenth-century grammarians like Nylöe (1703) or Verwer (1707) also seemed to support the <y> spelling (Vosters 2011: 240), although these preferences were only vaguely touched upon in

their publications. Furthermore, Nylöe (1703: 10) used both <y> and <ij> in his writing, despite arguing that "de *y* is een dubbelde *i*" (and not *ij*).

Hakvoord (1746: 46) accepted <y> as some kind of compromise. He actually preferred the old <i> spelling, but, at the same time, admitted that it might be too 'odd' and 'poor' from the user's perspective:

> Met deze i behoorde men te spellen by, gy, hi, wi, zi[63], enz. want het is een volkomen letter die de woorden haren behoorlyken klank geeft. Maar indien we dit volstrektelyk zo wilden gedaan hebben en zelfs deden dat zou den Lezer al te vreemd en mager voorkomen en niet nagevolgt worden want:
> Men kan in 't oud misbruik, en lang verloop der zaken,
> Eer alles stukken slaan, als 't kwade beter maken.
> En daarom volgen wy hier in de sleur, en spellen by, gy, hy, wy, zy, met een dubbelde y hoewel het ander beter is.

> 'With this i one had to spell by, gy, hi, wi, zi, etc., because it is a complete letter, which gives the words their proper sound. But if we wanted to do this completely and even did, then it would appear far too odd and poor to the reader, and would not be followed because:
> In the old misuse, and long course of things,
> One can rather smash everything into pieces, than make the wrong better.
> And thus we follow the routine here, and spell by, gy, hy, wy, zy, with a double y although the other is better.'

In general, it becomes evident that a number of eighteenth-century grammarians were more tolerant towards alternative spelling variants. Ten Kate (1723: 116), for example, described the choice between <y> and <ij> as arbitrary[64], since it is usage which gives a particular value to the character and the words (cf. also van de Bilt 2009: 185):

> onze scherpe *Kort-klinker* I, als bij MIN; en deeze tot omtrent op het dubbeld verlangt zijnde onze *Lang-klinker* Y (of IJ), als bij MYN (*Meus*) en LYDEN (*pati*) […] De Latynsche Y, schoon die van de Grieksche *Ypsilon* ontleent is, hebben onze Drukkers seedert eenige jaeren het zelfde doen gelden als onzen *Langklinker* IJ. Ik twiste hier niet oover de Gedaente der Letters, maer handele van onze Klanken, en welke Letterteikens daar voor gangbaer zijn. 't Gebruik geeft de Waerde zo wel aen de Characters als aen de Woorden.

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[63] It remains unclear why Hakvoord (1746) mentioned two different spellings here, i.e. <y> in *by*, *gy* alongside <i> in *hi*, *wi*, *zi*.

[64] It is important to keep in mind that ten Kate (1723) described two kinds of orthography. As pointed out by van der Wal (2002: 59), he made a distinction between "the 'burgerlijke' (civil) or 'gemeene' (common) orthography, based on custom, that is mainly on the usage of prestigious authors versus the 'natuerkundige' (physical) or 'critique' (critical) orthography, based on the principle of representing one sound by only one symbol". Therefore, ten Kate's 'tolerance' or 'indifference' towards alternative variants in common usage (e.g. <y> or <ij> as an 'arbitrary' choice) has to be interpreted against the background of his two spelling systems.

'our sharp short vowel I, as in MIN, and, approximately doubled in length, our long vowel Y (or IJ), as in MYN (*Meus*) and LYDEN (*pati*) […] Since a few years, our printers have used the Latin Y, although borrowed from the Greek *Ypsilon*, in the same way as our long vowel IJ. I do not argue about the form of the letters, but deal with our sounds, and which letters are commonly accepted for them. The use gives the value to both the characters and the words.'

Van der Palm's (1769: 4-5) view is remarkable as he advocated (and consistently used) the Greek-derived <y> spelling, but also acknowledged alternative variants. He argued that <ij> is not qualified to lengthen the *i* as it contains the consonant *j* (see the argumentation by Moonen and Sewel above). Therefore, <ii> should be used, which, he admitted, did not happen in practice:

Vr. Hoe kunnen dan de woorden *gy*, *by*, *myn*, *zyn*, enz, gespelt worden?
Antw. Zy zeggen dat men de woorden, die men voorhene met eene *y* geschreven heeft, met *ii*, of sieraedshalve met *ij* moet schryven, als *ziin* of *zijn*, *miin* of *mijn*, enz.
Vr. Wat is 'er dan van de letter *y* te houden?
Antw. Ons dunkt dat men de letter *y* niet zoo ligt uit onze Klinkeren moet verbannen: vooreerst, om dat onze Schryvers deze Grieksche Letter meest altydt zo veel als den langklinker *ij* hebben doen gelden, en dat dus hunne lettergrepen, met *y* gespelt, eenen anderen klank zouden verkrygen, indien men deze letter geheel wilde uitmonsteren: ten andere, om dat de *j*, als een Medeklinker, niet bekwaem is om de *i* te verlengen; waerom men genoodzaekt zoude zyn de spelling met *ii* intevoeren, 't geen echter van niemant geschiedt.

'*Q.* How can the words *gy*, *by*, *myn*, *zyn*, etc. be spelled then?
A. They say that one must write the words which had previously been written with a *y*, with *ii* or for the sake of decoration with *ij*, as *ziin* or *zijn*, *miin* or *mijn*, etc.
Q. What should one think about the letter *y* then?
A. It seems to us that one should not ban the letter *y* from our vowels so easily. First of all, because our writers have mostly used this Greek letter as the long vowel *ij*, and their syllables spelled with *y* would thus get a different sound, if one wants to reject this letter completely. On the other hand, because the *j* as a consonant is not able to lenghthen the *i*, which is why one would be forced to introduce the spelling with *ii*, which is done by nobody, though.'

Although he was certainly aware of the importance of norms, van der Palm (1769: 5) did not care about the spelling as either <y> or <ij> in usage, as long as the selected grapheme represents the right pronunciation:

Vr. Is dit geschil van eenig belang?
Antw. Het is van zeer weinig belang hoedanig men deze letter schryve, mits men dezelve den rechten klank mededeele.

'*Q.* Is this difference of any importance?
A. It is of very low importance how one writes this letter, as long as it represents the right sound.'

A similar stance towards the orthographic representation of Wgm. *i can be found in Heugelenburg (1763: 18). Unlike van der Palm, Heugelenburg preferred <ij>, but also acknowledged the alternative spelling (the *uitlandze* 'foreign' <y> in this case):

> Maar, aangemerkt dat de dubbelde ij mede een zeer helder geluit slaat, en aan veele woorden, in haar uitspraak kragt en klem bij zet, zo en zoude ik niet afkeerig zijn om dezelve voor een zesde Klinkletter, in het Staatendom van Nederlandze Spraake in te huldigen, schoon die uit een I en J word te zaamen gesteld. […]
> Dog al de gene die in deszelvs plaats de uitlandze Y, met die waardigheid willen vereeren ik kan verdraagen, en laat een ieder Beminnaar van de Spelkonst, daar in zijn eige bevatting en verkiezing opvolgen.

> 'But noting that the double ij also has a very clear sound, which adds power and emphasis to the pronunciation of many words, I should not be averse to inaugurating it as a sixth vowel letter in the State of the Dutch language, although it is composed of a I and J. […]
> But I can tolerate everyone who wants to honour the foreign Y instead with that dignity, and I let every lover of spelling follow his own opinion and choice.'

In the course of the century, another tendency emerged in metalinguistic comments, according to which <ij> should be used as the only spelling variant. Huydecoper (1730: 644) was one of the first grammarians to prescribe <ij> instead of <y>, the latter of which was exclusively used for foreign proper names:

> Wegens de Letter Y.
> De Leezer zal deeze Letter in de twee volgende Bladwijzers niet vinden, dan in Eigen Naamen van vreemden oorsprong: in Duitsche woorden, overall *ij*. […] De *y* is geen Duitsche Letter, maar een Latijnsche; vervangende, in die taale, de Grieksche *υ* of *Y*, als in *Pythagoras, Cyprus, Tyrannus, Polydemon*, enz.

> 'With regard to the letter Y.
> The reader will not find this letter in the two following tables of contents, only in proper names of foreign origin: in Dutch words, everywhere *ij*. […] The *y* is not a Dutch letter, but a Latin one, replacing the Greek *υ* or *Y* in this language, as in *Pythagoras, Cyprus, Tyrannus, Polydemon*, etc.'

Particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century, the use of <ij> was increasingly advocated in normative works. The 1770 grammar by the society *Kunst wordt door arbeid verkreegen* explicitly prescribed the use of the double-dotted spelling, while rejecting the <y>, which had sloppily and wrongfully 'intruded' into many Dutch words:

> De Grieksche *y* tellen wij daer niet onder, omdat zij niet tot ons behoort, en welke wij, op het voetspoor van den grooten HUYDECOPER, en andere Vraegbakens onzer Taelkunde, uitzonderen, gebruikende haer alleen in woorden, waerïn zij volstrekt wezen moet, en den vollen klank der *i* heeft, zonder t'samenvoeging met de *e*, als in *Cyrus, Cypres*, en diergelijken. (1770: 8)

Door deze *ij* verstaen wij niet de *y*, die zoo slordig in velen onzer Nederduitsche woorden, op een gansch onrechtmaetige wijze is ingedrongen; […] Wij bezigen dan voorts onveranderlijk niet de *y* maer de *ij*, met twee punten, en voornamelijk in deze woorden: *bedijden, bedrijven, belijden, benijden, bedijken, beklijven, bezwijmen,* en ontelbaere meer, genoegzaem aen den klank te kennen. (1770: 21-22)

'We do not count the Greek *y* as such, because it does not belong to us, and which we exclude, following the great HUYDECOPER and other handbooks of our language, only using it in words, where it must absolutely be, and where it has the full sound of *i*, without the combination with the *e*, as in *Cyrus, Cypres,* and the like.

By this *ij* we do not mean the *y*, which has so sloppily intruded into so many of our Dutch words in an entirely wrongful way […] In the following we invariably use not the *y* but the *ij*, with two dots, and especially in these words: *bedijden, bedrijven, belijden, benijden, bedijken, beklijven, bezwijmen,* and countless more, sufficiently recognisable by the sound.'

The argumentation here already shows strong similarities to the officialised rule by Siegenbeek, referring to the idea that the Greek and thus foreign *y* was alien to the Dutch language and must therefore be replaced by <ij> (except in proper names). Zeydelaar (1774) and Stijl & van Bolhuis (1776) followed this approach, too.

Towards the turn of the century, metalinguistic comments on <ij> versus <y> had become increasingly coherent. In fact, the rule in favour of <ij>, ultimately prescribed in Siegenbeek's 1804 orthography can already be found in most normative works published in the late 1700s, most notably van Bolhuis (1793), Weiland (1799) and, as quoted below, the *Rudimenta* (1799: 53-55):

Van de letter Y heeft men drie zaaken[65] op te merken als:
1. Dat de oprechte Y geene Nederduitsche maar eene vreemde letter is: – en daarom ook niet dan in vreemde woorden mag gebruikt worden, als in *Cyrus, Syllabe, Synode, Cyprus, Ivoor, Egypte, Hyssop, Pyrrus, Pyramide,* en dan klinkt zij als of er stont *Cirus, Egipte, Sinode, Hissop, Ivoor* enz.
2. Dat de IJ, welke in het Nederduitsch gebezigd en voor eene letter deezer taale aangetekend wordt, zoo zeer geen' Klinkletter, als wel eene verlengde I is, en dus als twee II behoorde geschreeven en uitgesprooken te worden […]

'About the letter Y one has to note three things, namely:
1. That the true Y is not a Dutch but a foreign letter: and thus it must not be used apart from in foreign words, as in *Cyrus, Syllabe, Synode, Cyprus, Ivoor, Egypte, Hyssop, Pyrrus, Pyramide,* and then it sounds as if it was *Cirus, Egipte, Sinode, Hissop, Ivoor* etc.

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[65] The third point, which is not quoted here, refers to another spelling issue, viz. the difference between <ij> and <ei>: "3. Dat vermits deeze letter bijna overal in ons Vaderland, als *ei* wordt uitgesprooken, men naauwkeurig behoort opteletten, dat men de IJ dan ook niet met EI verwarre" 'Since this letter is pronounced as *ei* almost everywhere in our fatherland, one has to mind carefully that one does not confuse the IJ with EI' (*Rudimenta* 1799: 54).

2. That the IJ, which is used in Dutch and denoted as a letter of this language, which is not primarily a vowel letter but rather a lengthened I, and thus has to be spelled and pronounced as two II […]'

The spelling choices by Kluit, who was undisputably a major source of inspiration for Siegenbeek, deserve special attention. In his 1763 and 1777 treatises, he actually suggested two different approaches. In Kluit's first *Vertoog* (1763), he prescribed both <ij> and <y> as coexisting variants, though used for Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in different positions. This led to a comparatively complex spelling rule (1763: 345):

> Daar wy thans de *i* gebruiken, in *bereyd*, *goetheyt* enz., daar schreven zy de *y*. Diezelfde *y* was by hun gangbaar op het slot eens woorts, als *gevly*, *my*, *by*; in tegendeel vinden wy altijt *ij*, wanneer de sluitletter een dubbele *i* vereischte in *wijn*, *schijn*, *schrijft*; en deze *ij* treffen wy ook meest aan, ingeval die opgenoemde woorden verlengt worden, als *wijne*, *schijnen*, *schrijven*.

> 'Where we use the *i* nowadays, in *bereyd*, *goetheyt* etc., they wrote the *y*. The same *y* was common at the end of a word, as *gevly*, *my*, *by*. In contrast, we always find *ij* when the final letter required a double *i* in *wijn*, *schijn*, *schrijft*; and this *ij* we also mostly find in case these mentioned words were lengthened, as *wijne*, *schijnen*, *schrijven*.'

For Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in open syllables as in *my* 'me', Kluit suggested the <y> spelling, whereas <ij> should be used in closed syllables as in *wijn* 'wine'. In derivations of words with Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in closed syllables, <ij> should also be used when the vowel occurs in open syllable, for instance in *schrijf* (closed syllable) – *schrijven* (open syllable, but not spelled as *schryf* due to derivation).

In his second *Vertoog*, Kluit (1777: 6) no longer distinguished <ij> and <y> in different syllabic positions, but invariably prescribed double-dotted <ij>:

> onder welker letters er ook bij ons *een* is, de *i*, namelijk, die thans ook door toeval in hare verlenging een teeken op zich zelf (de *ij*) heeft aangenomen, en daardoor zeer verkeerdlijk in het getal der Vocalen als een zesde Vocaal geplaatst is: waarbij ook komt, dat door zekere taalverbastering deze dubbele *ii*, (thans *ij*, of door de Drukkers lomper *y*, geschreven) in sommige Provincien of Dialecten den wanklank van de Diphthong *ei* gekregen heeft.

> 'among our letters there is also *one*, namely the *i*, which, in its lengthening, has now adopted a letter in its own right (the *ij*), also by coincidence, and thus placed very wrongfully among the vowels as a sixth vowel. In addition, this double *ii* (now *ij* or more clumsily written *y* by the printers) has received the cacophony of the diphthong *ei* in some provinces or dialects through a certain language corruption.'

Kluit remarked that the representation as <y> had been used 'clumsiliy' by printers. Interestingly, he did not refer to his earlier choices as discussed in 1763 (van de Bilt 2009: 191). In that sense, Kluit's shift from syllable-dependent <ij> and <y> in 1763 to <ij> only in his 1777 also illustrates the general development towards <ij> in normative works of the late 1700s (cf. also Vosters 2011: 240). Despite a general lack of uniformity in eighteenth-century metalinguistic

comments, the increasingly strong tendency in favour of <ij> paved the way for Siegenbeek's official norm prescribing the double-dotted spelling.

3   Previous research

It is not surprising that a controversially discussed spelling feature like the orthographic representation of Wgm. *ī as either (undotted) <y> or (double-dotted) <ij> has attracted the interest of several linguists. Matthijsen (1988: 133-134), for example, presents an overview of Siegenbeek's spelling choices in contrast to those of his well-known critic Willem Bilderdijk, referring to the *ij/y* controversy as "[h]et meest in het oog lopende verschil, dat direct als herkenningspunt gebruikt kan worden" 'the most striking difference, which can directly be used as a distinct feature'.

In the broader context of the standardisation of the Dutch spelling, Molewijk (1992: 113) also addresses *ij/y*, claiming that the <ij> spelling was very quickly adopted in the nineteenth century (i.e. after Siegenbeek's 1804 orthography). The corpus study of this variable in this chapter will show whether this was really the case.

The eighteenth-century normative tradition in the Northern Netherlands is at the heart of van de Bilt (2009). In his PhD thesis, he discusses the metalinguistic comments by various influential grammarians like Moonen, Verwer, ten Kate, Huydecoper, Kluit as well as Siegenbeek, also addressing the *ij/y* spelling issue.

Previous studies from a historical-sociolinguistic perspective have mainly focused on the situation in the Southern Netherlands, most notably Vosters (2011) and Vosters et al. (2012). With respect to norms and usage, they point out that eighteenth-century Flemish orthographers exclusively prescribed the undotted <y> spelling. In fact, <y> became a typically Southern spelling feature as opposed to double-dotted <ij> as the (seemingly) typical counterpart of the Northern Netherlands (Vosters et al. 2012: 263-264). In one of their case studies, based on a corpus of nineteenth-century manuscripts from the judicial and administrative domains, Vosters et al. (2012: 268) show that <y> is the dominant variant in Southern usage, occurring in roughly three quarters of all instances in the data sets from both 1823 and 1829. Given the fact that the Northern (Siegenbeek) variant <ij> was also increasingly prescribed in Southern normative works after 1815, this is a remarkable result, supporting the idea of the 'Southernness' of this variant.

Vosters et al. (2010) take a more comparative perspective, also investigating language variation in the Northern Netherlands. They present an overview of Northern norms as well as an exploratory case study on *ij/y* variation in a corpus of 100 private letters from the 1780s. It turns out that late eighteenth-century language practice (<ij>: 63%; <y>: 37%) was mainly in line with the heterogeneous character of eighteenth-century metalinguistic comments, which promoted both <ij> and <y> (cf. Section 2). Vosters et al. (2010: 105) further argue that this result is particularly striking from the perspective of the Southern normative tradition, as <ij> had frequently been evaluated as a typical Northern

feature since the eighteenth century. Building on these exploratory findings, the present chapter systematically examines variation and change in the use of variants, focusing on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.


4   Corpus analysis

4.1   Method

In the corpus analysis of the orthographic representation of Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$, four different variants were considered. Whereas both eighteenth-century normative works and Siegenbeek (1804) make a distinction between <ij> and <y>, there is actually much more variation in the handwritten texts of the *Going Dutch Corpus*, which had to be taken into account as well. Therefore, the following four (rather than just two) variants were distinguished during the transcription process of handwritten ego-documents (as pointed out earlier in Chapter 4):

(1)   <ij>   i.e. double-dotted <ij> with <i> and <j> written as two
           separate characters
(2)   <ÿ>   i.e. double-dotted <y>
(3)   <y>   i.e. (undotted) <y>[66]
(4)   Other   e.g. single-dotted <y>, <y> with accent marks or other
           diacritics, etc.
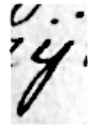
(1)   <ij>   **(2)   <ÿ>**   **(3)   <y>**   **(4)   Other**

Admittedly, the boundary between variants (1) and (2) is not always clear-cut in handwriting. In fact, they are best regarded as (sub-)variants both representing the double-dotted spelling, as opposed to the undotted variant (3). The fourth variant, transcribed in the *Going Dutch Corpus* as °y, actually comprises various forms, which are neither double-dotted nor undotted. Referred to as the variant 'Other' in this chapter, (4) comprises variants such as the single-dotted <y>, <y> with different accent marks, diacritics, and so on. None of these forms was actually mentioned or discussed in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

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[66] For the sake of clarity, I refer to <y> as the 'undotted' variant in this chapter. It should be noted, though, that this is mainly a perception from Siegenbeek (1804) onwards, with <y> being the 'undotted' variant of the prescribed spelling norm <ij> (or <ÿ>). Terminologically, 'undotted' might not be entirely accurate in the context of the more heterogeneous eighteenth-century normative tradition.

normative tradition, but they do occur in the *Going Dutch Corpus*. However, as they are relatively marginal in usage compared to the double-dotted and undotted spellings, it was decided to merge them into one category. In fact, the crucial aspect of the spelling choices in both language norms and language usage is the presence or absence of the (two) dots, i.e. the double-dotted spelling(s) <ij>/<ÿ> versus the undotted <y> spelling.

In order to be able to assess the actual use of variants in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century texts, the ten most frequent words containing Wgm. *ī were selected according to their occurrences in the *Going Dutch Corpus* (listed in order of decreasing frequency in the corpus):

- WIJ; ZIJN/SIJN; MIJ; BIJ, MIJN; ZIJ/SIJ; HIJ; GIJ; TIJD/ALTIJD; SCHRIJVEN/SCHRIJF

In the cases of ZIJN/SIJN and ZIJ/SIJ, orthographic variation between *s/z* was taken into account. Furthermore, TIJD and ALTIJD were combined into one set of words, as well as SCHRIJVEN/SCHRIJF, i.e. with two different verb forms, mainly in order to increase the number of tokens.

4.2　Results

In order to provide a general overview of the distribution of variants, the orthographic representation of Wgm. *ī was investigated in the entire *Going Dutch Corpus*, as shown in Table 1. The officially prescribed spelling (i.e. double-dotted <ij>/<ÿ>) is highlighted in light grey.

Table 1. Distribution of variants across time.

	Period 1: 1770–1790				Period 2: 1820–1840			
	<ij>	<ÿ>	<y>	Other	<ij>	<ÿ>	<y>	Other
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Total	322 (3.6)	3,156 (35.3)	4,668 (52.2)	800 (8.9)	989 (10.1)	3,369 (34.4)	4,934 (50.4)	497 (5.1)
Open syll.	121 (3.0)	1,525 (37.9)	2,042 (50.7)	341 (8.5)	277 (5.7)	1,776 (36.8)	2,508 (52.0)	266 (5.5)
Closed syll.	151 (4.5)	1,158 (34.3)	1,707 (50.6)	359 (10.6)	395 (16.4)	802 (33.2)	1,108 (45.9)	111 (4.6)

In the eighteenth century, the undotted <y> is prevalent in usage (52.2%), thus considerably more frequent than double-dotted <ij>/<ÿ> (38.9%). On a more graphological level, it turns out that the double-dotted realisation as <ÿ> (35.3%) clearly outnumbers the realisation as <ij> (3.6%), i.e. with <i> and <j> as

neatly separated characters. In addition to the undotted/double-dotted distinction, there is even room for more variation, collected in the category 'Other' (8.9%).

In the nineteenth-century period, i.e. after Siegenbeek's orthography was introduced, the overall distribution of variants remains surprisingly stable. The use of the prescribed double-dotted variants does increase from 38.9% to 44.5%, but with a share of 50.4%, the rejected undotted <y> is still most frequently used. Furthermore, the use of the other forms drops to an even more marginal 5.1%.

As pointed out in Section 2, a couple of eighteenth-century grammarians, including Kluit (1763), distinguished between Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in open and closed syllables, suggested to be spelled with <y> and <ij>, respectively. In order to take this internal factor into account as a possible source of influence on (particularly eighteenth-century) variation, the results for the three most frequent words with Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in open syllable (WIJ; MIJ; BIJ) and the three most frequent words with Wgm. *$\bar{\imath}$ in closed syllable (ZIJN/SIJN; MIJN; TIJD/ALTIJD) are also presented separately in Table 1. However, it turns out that there are hardly any syllable-related differences between the items under investigation. Especially in the eighteenth-century data, the variants are very similarly distributed across both open and closed syllables. It can therefore be assumed that the syllable-related distinction does not explain the high degree of variation in the distribution of spelling variants. In the discussion of external variables, this internal factor will no longer be considered.

Genre variation

Focusing on genre differences, the distribution of variants was investigated across the three sub-corpora, i.e. private letters (LET), diaries and travelogues (DIA), and newspapers (NEW). Figure 1 reveals major differences in the distribution of variants across genres.

Figure 1. Distribution of variants across genre and time.
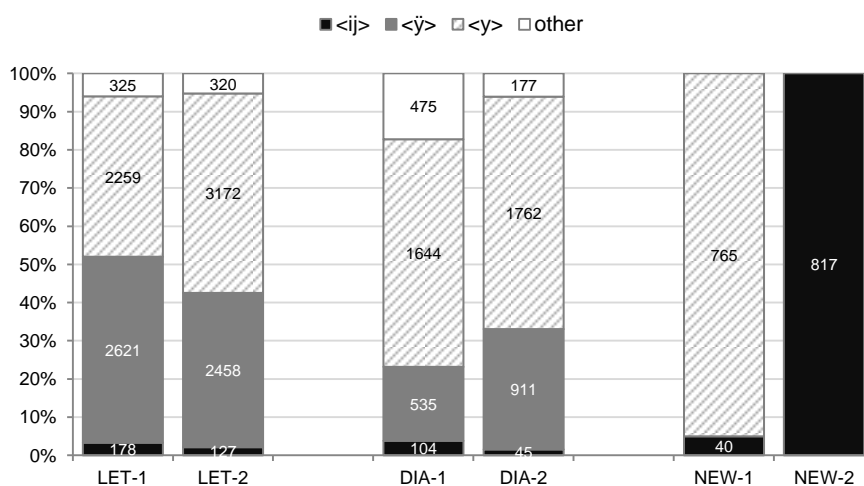
First of all, in eighteenth-century private letters, the double-dotted variants are slightly dominant (52.0%), but undotted <y> also occurs frequently (42.0%). The remaining 6.0% comprise the other variants. In diaries and travelogues, it is the undotted spelling which is predominantly used as the main eighteenth-century variant (59.6%). The double-dotted spellings are realised in only 23.2% of all instances. Furthermore, we can see a comparatively high share of the 'Other' category (17.2%). In the newspaper data from the same period, the use of variants is a rather clear-cut choice. Undotted <y> is more or less exclusively used (95.0%), except for a number occurrences of <ij> (5.0%), which all derive from the *Utrechtse courant* (representing the region of Utrecht).

In the nineteenth century, after Siegenbeek prescribed <ij> as the national variant, the use of the double-dotted spellings surprisingly decrease from 52.0% to 42.5% in private letters. The undotted spelling <y> becomes the dominant variant (52.2%). In contrast, the use of the double-dotted spelling increases from 23.2% to 33.0% in diaries and travelogues. <y> remains by far the most frequently used variant, though, with a stable share of 60.9%. More generally, this means that <y> is the main variant in nineteenth-century ego-documents. As in the first period, nineteenth-century newspapers consistently use one single variant. However, a radical change of variants took place in these texts, involving a complete shift from <y> in period 1 to <ij> in period 2. Newspapers thus adopt the prescribed spelling in 100%.

In general, genre variation reveals two different types of distribution: On the one hand, much variation in the use and distribution of variants can be attested in the sub-corpora of private letters as well as diaries and travelogues, i.e. in handwritten ego-documents. On the other hand, there is a clear-cut, consistent choice of variants in printed, published newspapers. This strongly suggests that genre or, more precisely, the medium of the genre (i.e. print versus handwriting, cf. also Rutkowska & Rössler 2012) is an important factor with regard to the orthographic representation of Wgm. *ī.

Regional variation

Examining possible regional variation in the investigated language area, Table 2 presents the distribution of variants across regions in the entire *Going Dutch Corpus* (FR = Friesland, GR = Groningen, NB = North Brabant, NH = North Holland, SH = South Holland, UT = Utrecht, ZE = Zeeland).

To begin with, there is much regional variation in the distribution of variants. In the eighteenth-century period, undotted and double-dotted spelling generally co-occur in actual language usage, although the degree to which the main variants dominate differs per region. In the eighteenth-century period, the double-dotted variants are prevalent in usage in the two northernmost regions of Friesland (51.7%) and Groningen (53.9%). In all other regions, undotted <y> is most frequently used, particularly in North Holland, which has by far the highest <y> share (71.8%).

Remarkably, the category of variants other than undotted or double-dotted is comparatively strong in the southern regions of North Brabant (16.1%) and Zeeland (16.9%), both of which are border regions to the Southern Netherlands[67].

Table 2. Distribution of variants across region and time.

|	Period 1: 1770–1790				Period 2: 1820–1840			
	\<ij>	\<ÿ>	\<y>	Other	\<ij>	\<ÿ>	\<y>	Other
	N (%)	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**	**N (%)**
FR	124 (11.2)	450 (40.5)	455 (41.0)	81 (7.3)	115 (8.2)	451 (32.1)	737 (52.5)	102 (7.3)
GR	36 (3.2)	580 (50.7)	482 (42.1)	46 (4.0)	127 (8.4)	655 (43.5)	662 (43.9)	63 (4.2)
NB	13 (0.9)	382 (27.5)	769 (55.4)	223 (16.1)	229 (19.8)	296 (25.7)	527 (45.7)	102 (8.8)
NH	19 (1.6)	292 (25.0)	837 (71.8)	18 (1.5)	167 (11.0)	465 (30.6)	853 (56.0)	37 (2.4)
SH	34 (2.6)	472 (35.8)	679 (51.5)	134 (10.2)	117 (7.1)	545 (32.9)	953 (57.4)	44 (2.7)
UT	78 (6.6)	454 (38.3)	622 (52.4)	33 (2.8)	117 (8.2)	356 (24.9)	907 (63.5)	48 (3.4)
ZE	18 (1.2)	526 (33.5)	760 (48.4)	265 (16.9)	117 (10.5)	601 (54.0)	295 (26.5)	101 (9.1)

In the nineteenth-century period, undotted \<y> remains the main variant in nearly all regions, most notably in Utrecht (63.5%) and, to a lesser extent, the Holland area. The use of Siegenbeek's double-dotted spelling even drops considerably in Friesland (from 51.7% to 40.3%) and Utrecht (from 44.9% to 33.1%). The prescribed spelling, on the other hand, gains ground in North Holland (from 26.6% to 41.6%), North Brabant (from 28.4% to 45.5%) and especially Zeeland, which shows the strongest increase of \<ij>/\<ÿ> from 34.7% to a 64.5%. At the same time, the use of undotted \<y> decreases from 48.4% to 26.5% here. In fact, Zeeland is the only region in which the double-dotted spelling is established as the main variant in conformity with Siegenbeek's prescription.

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[67] It might be argued that the strikingly high share of alternative variants (including \<y> with accent marks) in the two border regions North Brabant and Zeeland is related to their possible orientation towards the Southern norms and/or practices. In fact, accent marks (at least for *e*'s and *o*'s) were typical of Southern usage and widely discussed in Southern normative works (cf. ch. 5 and 6 in Rutten 2011). Even though they were not intended for *y*'s, it might well be that the salience of accent marks in general led to an increasing use of \<y> variants with accent marks in (hand)writing.

Regional variation across genres

Taking into account the major differences in the distribution of variants across genres (as shown in Figure 1), regional variation will also be looked at in the three genres individually. First, Figure 2 displays the results in the sub-corpus of private letters.

**Figure 2.** Distribution of variants across region and time (private letters).
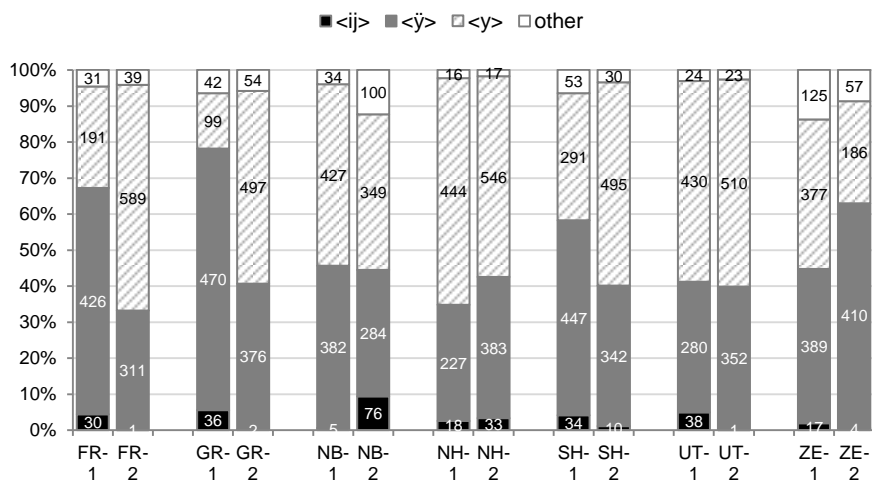
The eighteenth-century data reveal that the double-dotted variants <ij>/<ÿ> are dominant in private letters from the northern regions of Friesland (67.3%) and particularly Groningen (78.2%), as well as in South Holland (58.3%). Surprisingly, after Siegenbeek's officialised norm, the use of the double-dotted spelling considerably drops in these three regions, while undotted <y> becomes the main variant in the nineteenth-century. A rather stable coexistence of undotted and double-dotted variants across both periods can be found in North Brabant and Utrecht. <y> is most frequently used in eighteenth-century North Holland (62.9%). In the nineteenth-century data of this region, the use of the double-dotted spellings increases from 34.8% to 42.5%. However, it is only in private letters from Zeeland in which the officialised double-dotted spelling considerably gains ground as the predominant variant(s) in nineteenth-century usage (from 44.7% to 63.0%).

Next, the results across regions drawn from the sub-corpus of diaries and travelogues are presented in Figure 3. In the eighteenth-century period, <y> is the most frequently used variant across all seven regions. The extent to which it dominates in usage differs, though. It is clearly the main variant in Groningen (69.3%), South Holland (72.5%) and particularly North Holland (80.2%). In Utrecht, <y> (51.2%) co-occurs with the similarly frequent double-dotted spelling (46.4%). In several regions, the presence of alternative variants from the 'Other' category is also remarkable: In North Brabant, they have an extraordinarily high share of 45.5%, co-occurring with <y>. Moreover, the alternative options are fairly

frequent in Zeeland (24.7%) and South Holland (21.0%), and, to a lesser extent, in Friesland (16.7%).

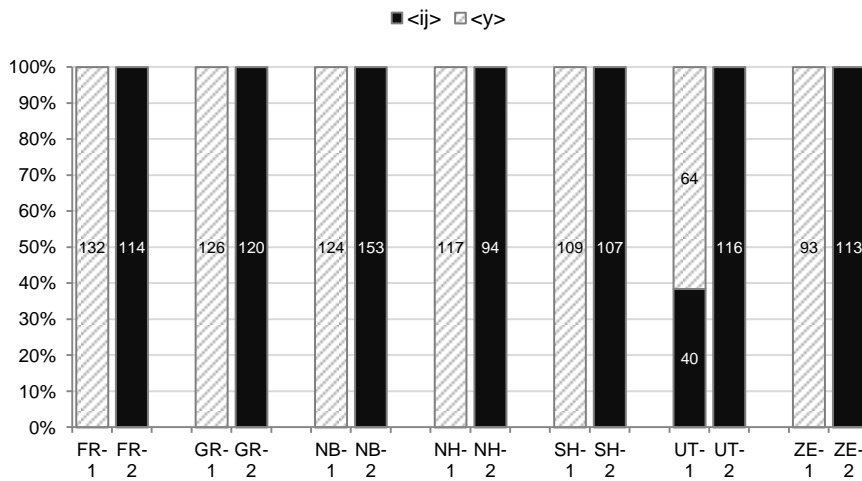**Figure 3.** Distribution of variants across region and time (diaries and travelogues).
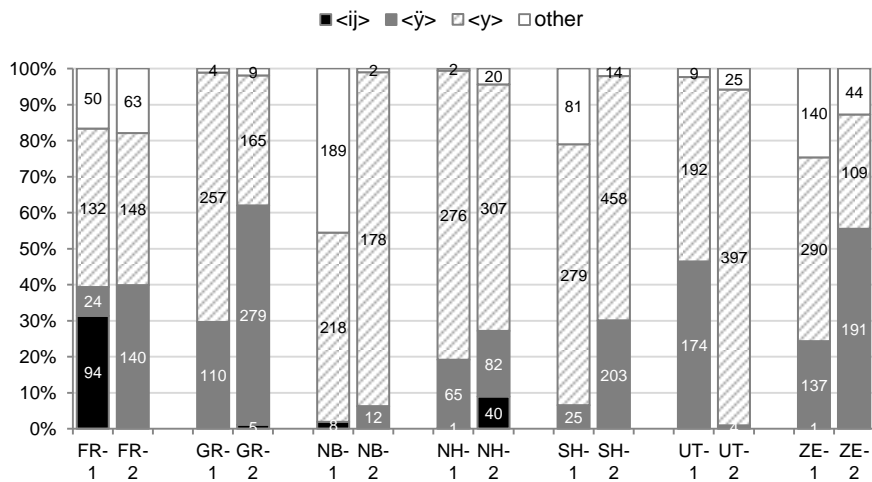
In the nineteenth-century period, the prescribed double-dotted spelling becomes the main variant in diaries and travelogues from Groningen (62.0%) and Zeeland (55.5%). It also gains considerable ground in South Holland (from 6.5% to 30.1%), although <y> remains the predominantly used variant, which is actually the case in most regions. Particularly from a diachronic perspective, some results in this sub-corpus are surprising. In nineteenth-century texts from Utrecht, the prescribed double-dotted spellings practically disappear, whereas <y> becomes by far the dominant variant (93.2%). The same distribution can be found in North Brabant (<y>: 92.7%), although the development across periods is different than in Utrecht. In fact, it seems that North Brabant diarists do not apply the double-dotting spelling, neither before nor after 1804. It has to be noted, though, that there is only one nineteenth-century diary from North Brabant in the *Going Dutch Corpus*, which is why the results might also be due to an idiosyncratic preference for <y> rather than a regional pattern.

Finally, Figure 4 shows the distribution of variants across regions in newspapers. In contrast to the regional results for handwritten ego-documents, the use of variants in these printed, published texts can be described as clear-cut and invariable across all regions. As noted before, there is a complete shift from <y> in eighteenth-century newspapers to <ij> in nineteenth-century newspapers, perfectly in line with Siegenbeek (1804).

The only deviation here is that eighteenth-century newspaper texts from Utrecht (all from the *Utrechtse courant*) use both <y> (61.5%) and <ij> (38.5%). On closer inspection, however, it turns out that this distribution is not based on a

systemic use of variants for open and closed syllables, as suggested by several eighteenth-century grammarians like Kluit (1763). In fact, there is no evidence that this syllable-related rule is reflected in eighteenth-century language practice at all.
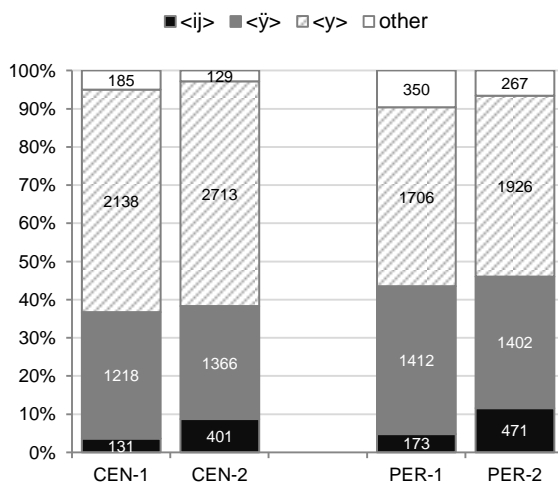
Figure 4. Distribution of variants across region and time (newspapers).

Variation across centre and periphery
Spatial variation was also investigated on the centre–periphery level (CEN = centre, PER = periphery), based on the entire *Going Dutch Corpus* and shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Distribution of variants across centre–periphery and time.

The results indicate that the changes in the distribution of variants across centre and periphery are rather marginal. In the first period, undotted <y> (58.2%) is the main variant in the centre, whereas <ij> and <ÿ> together have a share of only 36.7%. In the periphery, undotted (46.9%) and double-dotted (43.5%) spellings coexist as similarly strong variants. In the second period, the use of the double-dotted spelling minimally increases both in the centre (38.3%) and the periphery (46.1%). The share of <y> also remains stable in the centre (58.9%) and the periphery (47.4%).

Gender variation

Figure 6 displays the distribution of variants across gender (M = male writers, F = female writers), based on the ego-document data.

Figure 6. Distribution of variants across gender and time.
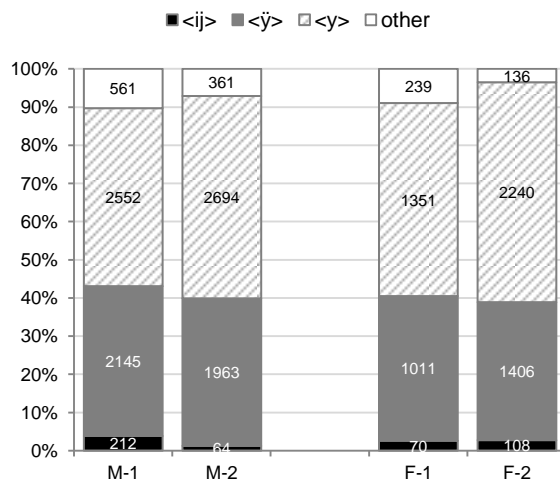
The results reveal practically no gender differences. Both male and female writers use double-dotted variants <ij> and <ÿ> in roughly 40% of all instances across both time periods. In the late eighteenth-century period, undotted <y> is the most frequently used variant written by men (46.7%) and women (50.6%). In the early nineteenth century, <y> even gains ground in ego-documents by both male (53.0%) and female writers (57.6%). In other words, the use of the double-dotted spelling slightly decreases after it was officially prescribed: from 43.1% to 39.9% among men, and from 40.5% to 38.9% among women. Generally speaking, the distribution across genders can be described as rather stable, as there are no considerable diachronic changes.

5   Discussion

In this chapter, the orthographic representation of Wgm. *ī was investigated, taking into account metalinguistic comments in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century normative works as well as actual language usage in the *Going Dutch Corpus*. As pointed out in Section 1, Siegenbeek (1804) prescribed the double-dotted spelling <ij> as the national variant, while vehemently rejecting the Greek-derived and thus foreign <y> in 'proper Dutch' words with Wgm. *ī. Siegenbeek ultimately codified this variant in his orthography after a controversial normative discussion about the spelling as <y> or <ij> throughout the eighteenth century.

In fact, eighteenth-century grammarians had different views on this spelling issue, promoting either <y> or <ij>, or even both of them (cf. also Table 3 in Vosters et al. 2010: 101). In Section 2, it was outlined that early eighteenth-century grammarians preferred <y> over <ij>, either implicitly (Moonen 1706) or explicitly (Sewel 1708). Not all grammarians favouring <y> heavily disapproved <ij>, though. Van der Palm (1769), for example, did prefer <y> but was rather indifferent about the use of alternative spellings. Heugelenburg (1763), on the other hand, preferred <ij> but did not mind the use of <y> either. Ten Kate (1723) even acknowledged the use of both <y> and <ij> as two entirely equal, coexisting variants, whereas Kluit (1763) introduced a more complex rule, prescribing <y> for open syllables and <ij> in closed syllables. Although Huydecoper already advocated <ij> as the only variant as early as 1730, it was only in the last decades of the eighteenth-century that normative works such as *Kunst wordt door arbeid verkreegen* (1770), Zeydelaar (1774), Stijl & van Bolhuis (1776), Kluit (1777), the *Rudimenta* (1799) and Weiland (1799) more coherently promoted <ij> – paving the way for Siegenbeek's choice in his official orthography.

The corpus results of eighteenth-century language practice (Section 4) were largely in line with the heterogeneous normative discussion, in which both <y> and <ij> were promoted (cf. also Vosters, et al. 2010: 103). It was shown that both undotted and double-dotted spellings occurred frequently in actual language usage and were, in fact, two coexisting main variants (alongside a few other, more marginally occurring variants). This distribution was at least typical of handwritten ego-documents. In eighteenth-century newspapers, there was a clear preference for <y>, which was invariably used in practically all texts from this sub-corpus.

After Siegenbeek's prescription in favour of <ij>, thus rejecting <y>, the use and distribution of variants remained surprisingly stable. Keeping in mind the results from the previous case studies in Chapters 5–8, one might assume that the official spelling must have gained ground in actual language use, but this was not the case – in ego-documents at least. Undotted <y> turned out to be the prevalent nineteenth-century variant in these handwritten texts. In private letters, the use of the double-dotted spelling even dropped, whereas it slightly increased in diaries and travelogues. In contrast, nineteenth-century newspapers consistently adopted the officialised <ij> spelling, completely shifting from pre-Siegenbeek <y> to post-Siegenbeek <ij>.

On the spatial dimension, a considerable amount of regional variation was attested. Although distinct patterns were difficult to find, some results were striking. First of all, there was a more or less balanced coexistence of various spellings in most eighteenth-century regions, whereas <y> clearly dominated in the North Holland data of the first period. In the nineteenth century, the use of <y> decreased in favour of prescribed <ij>/<ÿ>, but maintained its dominant position. However, Zeeland turned out to be the only region, in which the prescribed spelling notably gained ground and clearly became the main variant in nineteenth-century usage. In line with previous observations, these regional differences were also limited to handwritten ego-documents. In newspapers, the choice of variants was consistent across the entire language area (except for some variation in eighteenth-century newspapers from Utrecht).

The gender dimension did not reveal any interesting variation patterns as male and female writers used undotted and double-dotted variants similarly across both periods.

With regard to (seemingly) unsystematic regional variation and practically no gender variation at all, it can be concluded that variation and change in this orthographic variable are primarily genre-dependent. More specifically, the medium of the genre, i.e. printed and handwritten, turned out to be the most crucial factor. While the overall development in the entire *Going Dutch Corpus* was surprisingly stable and did not reveal any considerable changes from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the results in the individual sub-corpora showed major differences, mainly between printed (i.e. newspapers) and handwritten (i.e. ego-documents) texts. Referring back to Molewijk's (1992: 113) bold claim that "de *ij* [zou] zeer snel algemeen worden aanvaard" 'the *ij* would be adopted very quickly in general' in the nineteenth century, this study clearly shows that this was not the case – if we also take into account handwritten texts.

As mentioned before, printed and published texts like newspapers did adopt the prescribed norm invariably. But how can we explain the minimal changes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ego-documents, maintaining the officially rejected <y> as the most frequently used variant? Did Siegenbeek's prescription fail to reach the language users, or is it the very nature of this orthographic variable that prevented a noticeable change in handwriting? Vosters et al. (2010: 99) witness a similar tendency in their case study and suggest a possible explanation:

> Alleen in de keuze tussen <y> en <ij> treedt nauwelijks een verandering op, wat goed kan samenhangen met het minimale verschil tussen de varianten in handschrift: de letter wordt altijd hetzelfde gevormd, onderscheidend is alleen de aan- dan wel afwezigheid van de puntjes.

> 'Only in the choice between <y> and <ij>, hardly any change occurs, which can very well be connected with the minimal difference between the variants in handwriting. The letter is always formed in the same way. Only the presence or absence of the dots is distinctive.'

Indeed, the close similarities between the variants in handwriting might result in a relatively limited awareness of differences among language users. It is

questionable whether the presence or absence of the two dots was really as salient for the early nineteenth-century language user as it was for Siegenbeek (and many of his eighteenth-century predecessors). Judging from the corpus results, it seems as if many post-Siegenbeek writers of private letters, diaries and travelogues were hardly or not aware of the double-dotting of the <y> (as the officially prescribed variant) in handwriting.

Another question that arises with regard to the particularly high degree of variation in this orthographic variable concerns individual behavior. Is the variation attested in both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ego-documents based on groups of writers with a clear spelling preference, consistently using either <ij>/<ÿ> or <y>? Or did these writers inconsistently use various variants in their texts, without any awareness of the double- or undottedness of their <y> spelling? This issue will be addressed separately in Chapter 13, zooming in on variation and change in inter- and intra-individual spelling practices.